



South Australian Aviation Museum

Aircraft Profile

ENGLISH ELECTRIC CANBERRA B2 WK165

Twin engine military bomber

History of WK165

WK165 was built by AVRO at Woodford, UK, in February 1955 and delivered to the RAF in March 1955 and subsequently transferred to the RAAF. In March 1956, it was transferred to WRE Edinburgh Field for Air Trials Unit. It was used for flying radar calibration and ranging tasks out of Woomera and Maralinga for many years. It was also used for airborne photography of weapons (including Operation Buffalo Atomic Bomb Tests).



In February 1963 it was transferred to the No. 4 Joint Services Trials Unit and served until December 1969. In February 1970 it was struck off charge from the RAAF. In February 1985, it was at Eureka Aviation Museum Ballarat, Victoria, where it was in open display and suffered from vandalism and the elements. After a long period in storage WK165 was restored and generously donated to the Museum by Neville Mason. It joined the collection in June 1997. It is displayed in its former white colour scheme, typical of research and weapons testing aircraft based at Woomera.



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History of Type

The Canberra had its origins in 1944 as a replacement for the de Havilland Mosquito bomber of the RAF. In May 1945, a contract was signed with English Electric, but with the post-war military wind-down, the prototype did not fly until May 1949. Total worldwide Canberra production was 1352.

The Canberra had two crew under a fighter-style canopy, but delays of the intended automatic radar bombsight resulted in the addition of a bomb aimer's position in the nose. The Canberra entered service with RAF in May 1951. Built in 27 versions, it equipped 35 RAF squadrons, and was exported to many countries including Australia. In the USA it was built under licence as the Martin B-57.

In Australia, the Government Aircraft Factory (GAF) built 48 for the RAAF, broadly similar to the British B2. Canberra's replaced the Lincoln bombers from 1954 and were used by the RAAF in the Vietnam War. Armament was typically 4 x 340kg (750lb) M1117 bombs in the weapons bay plus two others mounted externally. The maximum internal bomb load was 3,629 kg (8,000 lb). Canberra's remained in front-line service with major air forces throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s, and a few continued through the '80s and '90s. After sterling service, the last RAAF Canberra was withdrawn from service in June 1982.





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Technical Specifications

Engines:	2 x Rolls-Royce RA-3 Avon Mk 1
Maximum take-off weight:	21,312 kg
Length:	19.96 m
Wing span:	19.5 m
Height:	4.75 m
Cruising speed:	458 kt (871 kph at 40,000 ft / 12,200 m) Ceiling: 47,800 ft (14,600 m)
Range:	5,470 km (3,200 nm) with maximum payload
Crew:	1 pilot and 1 navigator/mission specialist